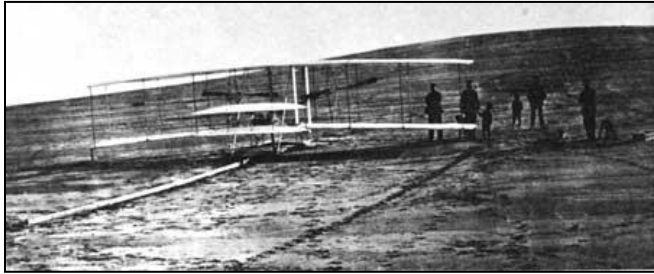




This Week in USAF and PACAF History 10 – 16 Dec 2012

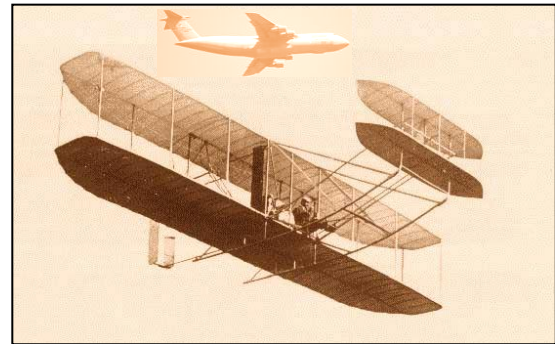


10 Dec 1898 **The United States acquired Guam and the Philippines.** Under the Treaty of Paris, the U.S. acquired Puerto Rico and Guam and agreed to pay Spain \$20 million for the Philippines. This marked the beginning of the expansion of U.S. interests in the Pacific region. At the time of the turnover, the local population of Guam had grown to about 10,000 inhabitants.



14 Dec 1903 Wilbur Wright made the **first powered airplane flight** at Kill Devil Hills, Kitty Hawk, N.C. Although he flew 105 feet in 3.5 seconds, the plane crashed; therefore, this effort was not recognized as the first sustained or controlled flight.

Three days later, on 17 Dec 1903, Wilbur's brother Orville achieved the Wright brothers' goal of the **world's first manned, powered, sustained and controlled flight in a heavier-than-air vehicle.** The Wright *Flyer* lifted into the air at 10:35 a.m. and flew for twelve seconds, covering a distance of 121 feet (coincidentally, the length of a C-5 Galaxy cargo bay). Orville's fourth and longest flight of the day was 852 feet in 59 seconds.



11 Dec 1914 Army Signal Corps officers in the Philippines conducted the **first U.S. military two-way air-to-ground radio communication.** During World War I and later, radio communications greatly enhanced navigation, real-time reconnaissance and situation updates, air tasking adjustments and coordination of massed air attacks on enemy air and surface forces.

10 Dec 1941 Five B-17s of the 93d Bombardment Squadron, 19th Bombardment Group carried out the **first heavy bombardment mission of World War II**, attacking a Japanese convoy as it landed troops on the northern coast of Luzon.

13 Dec 1941 President Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the Secretary of War to **take control of any civilian airline needed for the war effort.** Contracts with the airlines permitted the purchase of aircraft and airline services. Ten years later, on 15 Dec 1951, the USAF directed the Military Air Transport Service to develop the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) program.



16 Dec 1941 Flying a P-40 Warhawk, 1st Lt. Boyd "Buzz" Wagner became the **first U.S. Army Air Forces ace of World War II** with his fifth aerial victory in the Philippines. Wagner had a total of eight kills in the war, the last three while flying the P-39 Airacobra. He later received the Distinguished Service Cross. (See photo of 1st Lt. Wagner at left.)



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History **10 – 16 December 2012**



14 Dec 1946 President Truman approved the **Outline Plan establishing seven regional commands**, including Alaskan Command (ALCOM), Far East Command and Pacific Command. The Navy wanted a unified command for the entire Pacific, but the other services preferred that commands be established by mission rather than geographical area. A compromise was reached, resulting in the Outline Plan approved by President Truman.



Two days later, on 16 Dec 1946, the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued a **directive establishing Alaskan Command, Far East Command and Pacific Command** effective 1 January 1947. The executive agents for these commands respectively were Commanding General, Army Air Forces (later Chief of Staff, Air Force), the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Staff, Army. Maj Gen Howard A. Craig, US Army Air Forces, became the first commander of Alaskan Command in addition to serving as the Commander of the Alaskan Department.

10 Dec 1954 **Highest G-forces.** In a rocket-propelled sled run, Lt. Col. John P. Stapp, USAF, reached 632 mph and sustained greater G forces (25 Gs with peaks to 40 Gs) than humans had ever endured in recorded deceleration tests—the equivalent of Mach 1.7 at 35,000 feet. The test determined that **humans could survive ejection from aircraft at supersonic speeds.**

11 Dec 1956 **Operation SAFE HAVEN began.** By 30 June 1957, the U.S. Air Force had airlifted more than 10,000 Hungarian refugees from West Germany to asylum in the United States. The refugees fled their country as Soviet troops crushed an anticommunist rebellion.

This was one of several “Safe Haven” operations. Operation SAFE HAVEN 1967 airlifted U.S. civilian dependents from Wheelus AFB, Libya; Operation SAFE HAVEN 1994 moved Cuban migrants from Guantanamo to Panama; and Operation SAFE HAVEN IRAQ 2009 airlifted endangered Iraqis who had supported U.S. and allied operations in their country.

14 Dec 1964 **Operation BARREL ROLL armed reconnaissance missions were first flown in Laos.** This mission initiated continuous tactical fighter operations in Southeast Asia.



16 Dec 1998 **Operation DESERT FOX** began with the launch of cruise missiles and air strikes by the U.S. and Great Britain after Iraq refused to allow United Nations weapons inspectors to continue their work. The four-day operation hit some 100 enemy weapons production facilities. The largest air campaign against Iraq since DESERT STORM in 1991, Operation DESERT FOX involved the first combat use of B-1B Lancer bombers. (At left, a B-1 weapon release during training.)



U.S. AIR FORCE

This Week in USAF and PACAF History **10 – 16 December 2012**



13 Dec 2001 President George Bush provided a formal six-month notice to Russia of the **United States' withdrawal from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty**. President Bush stated: "I have concluded the ABM treaty hinders our government's ability to develop ways to protect our people from future terrorist or rogue state missile attacks." It cleared the way for the construction of a missile defense system in Alaska. The plans called for basing a command center and silo-based missiles at Fort Greely and an advanced radar installation at Eareckson AS on Shemya. (Photo at left shows the first ground-based interceptor missile being lowered into its silo in 2004.)

15 Dec 2005 **The F-22A Raptor reached initial operating capability** for the 27th Fighter Squadron and the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley AFB. The F-22 has a low-observable, highly maneuverable airframe; advanced integrated avionics and aerodynamic performance allowing supersonic cruise without afterburner.

